Extracts from Letters

chers and Superintendents of the
England Educational Commission for

Freedmen

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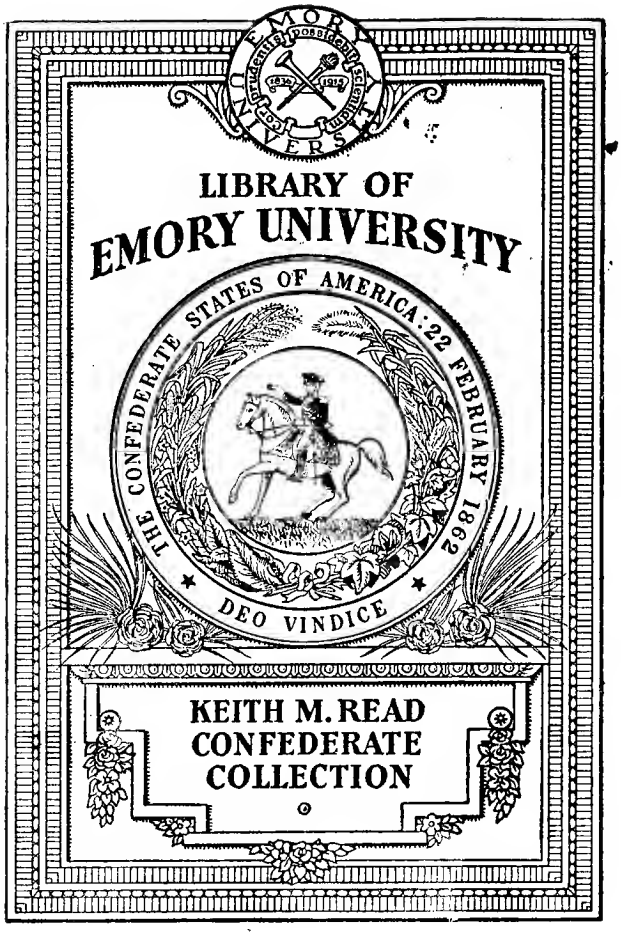
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EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

OF

TEACHERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

OF THE

New-England Educational Commission

FOR

FREEDMEN.

FOURTH SERIES.

JANUARY 1, 1864.

BOSTON:

DAVID CLAPP, PRINTER.....334 WASHINGTON STREET.

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OF THE NEW-ENGLAND EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FREEDMEN.

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Clothing and Supplies received at Wellington, Bros. & Co.'s, No. 103 Devonshire Street.

Office, No 8 Studio Building,

Tremont Street, Boston.

NEW-ENGLAND EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR FREEDMEN.

SINCE the publication of the Annual Report, the Commission has been actively engaged in sending out Teachers, Superintendents, and material aid to the Freedmen of the South and West. In South Carolina the schools have now been in operation more than a year and a half, and the progress made by the colored pupils is considered by the teachers as at least equal to that of pupils in Northern schools. The success of the industrial movement among the Freedmen of Port Royal is equally marked with that of the schools. They have shown a capacity for intelligent and continued labor which would do credit to any community. The most industrious among them have not only supported their own families, but have accumulated no inconsiderable amount of money. Some of them have purchased lands, which they cultivate with energy and profit. In Virginia and North Carolina the success of the schools has been as great, in proportion to the time during which they have been in operation, as in South Carolina. The Freedmen in those States have also shown the same readiness to labor that has characterized them at Port Royal. Encouraging progress has been made in the reorganization of labor among the Freedmen of the Southwestern States, and in many localities valuable crops have been raised by them during the past season.

The Freedmen within our lines in South Carolina are now self-supporting, and need no further contributions of material aid. Those in Virginia and North Carolina are fast becoming so, while the great destitution of many families among those at the West, it is hoped and believed, will cease as soon as the plans now in progress for employing them upon the land early in the coming spring are perfected and put in operation. This Commission has already distributed a large amount of clothing and supplies, and will continue to aid those

actually in want, to the extent of its ability. But it is particularly desirous to discourage among them the idea that such aid is to be permanent. This kind of assistance is regarded only as *temporary*, to be discontinued as soon as the immediate necessity has passed away.

The chief objects of this Commission have been the education and elevation of the Freedmen by means not only of schools and teachers, but of all influences that shall encourage industry, self-reli[illegible] and self-respect. For these purposes, as well as for the sup[illegible] immediate relief to those in need, it still asks for further co[illegible] butions to its funds. The field of its labor is constantly enla[illegible] ing, and new efforts are demanded to meet the increasing wants It has hitherto confined its action chiefly to the Atlantic States, but it has now an agent in New Orleans, with a view of extending its influence to those of the South West. The amount of good already accomplished by this Association, with so small an amount of funds, is believed to be almost without parallel among enterprises of this character. It has demonstrated, by actual experiment, the capacity of the Freedmen for self-support, and shown that the transition from slavery to freedom is neither difficult nor dangerous if made under friendly and judicious guidance.

To enable the Commission to continue and extend its operations, to send out more teachers and establish new schools, which are urgently called for, it is necessary that additional subscriptions of money should be obtained. For this object the formation of Auxiliary Associations in the cities and towns of New England is earnestly recommended. Such Associations can render most efficient aid by forwarding funds for the support of Teachers to the Treasurer of this Commission. They will be invited to select Teachers from among those in the service of the Commission, whose salaries they will be responsible for, with whom they may correspond, and to whose care they may send clothing and supplies for the Freedmen.

Auxiliary Associations, which have been already formed in several towns, are now in successful operation. This Commission will act as the central agent for all New-England Associations.

BOSTON, JANUARY 1st, 1864.

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EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

OF

TEACHERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS.

LETTERS FROM SOUTH CAROLINA.

ST. HELENA ISLAND, JULY 9th, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,—I send you a letter from the School Committee. I give it *word for word*, as it fell from the lips of Robert, leaving out a few remarks about myself. They have been very faithful, and will be found a great help to future teachers.

Yours most sincerely, A. D. MILNE.

DEAR SIR,—The Committee of the Adams School, on this Island, would say, that in regard to our ignorance, we were all ignorant and blind, and have been kept back in darkness by our former masters, who used to hold us under bondage and hide the light from us. But thank God that through the prayers of good people, the good friends of the North, through the assistance of God, are helping us to drop the scales from our eyes. We have think within ourself, while we were under slavery bondage, that we could never seen this sight, that we have, and all our friends and parents, who have children, think that they cannot pray and thank God enough, and the good friends of the North, who are striving to let us see this light. Even I myself, Robert L. Chaplin, myself 73 years old, had feel within myself that it was impossible that the slavery bound could ever again see light in this world, until the good friends send us a good friend, that teach us that all things are possible with God, and that old and young can see light in their old age. The children and people all, now, desire to learn to read, and we hope you will be pleased not to let us suffer for a teacher, for the children of this district was very much neglect, above any other part of the Island, until our present teacher came, and now his health is gone and he is not able to hold out through the season, and we feel very much distressed in our mind for want of his teaching. All the good we can do for ourself, is but little, we were kept down so, by our seeesh masters, but we will do what we can and return our thanks by our prayers to the friends that help us.

We were so delight to see the children improve, that our teacher voted to have a committee of four and myself makes five, to visit the school and see that everything go on regular among all the children, and we stand the assistance of the teacher as far as we are able and our understanding goes.

All the books and property that belong to the School, is in our charge, and if a teacher is sent we shall be sponsible for the same. We will write to you again and let you know how we get along. Our district will need a man teacher, a good strong man, because there is deal of work in a large school. We generally have lecture every Sunday evening, from three to four o'clock among the children and people, and we have seen that it makes the children and people improve more greatly.

If we should have another teacher, we feel that we shall continue on in every way to receive knowledge. Through the assistance of the Lord we pray that as we improve in one thing we may improve in everything, more and more every year.—We give great thanks to the Lord for the good things he has sent already.

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This letter is signed by all the five committee men, who are all present, and very thankfully agree to what is said, and we shall all be pleased to receive any message from you.

ROBERT L. CHAPLIN, ⋈ *Chairman.*
JOHN EDWARD, his ⋈ mark.
WILLIAM JEFFERSON, his ⋈ mark.
DANIEL BOLLES, his ⋈ mark.
WILLIAM SCOTT, his ⋈ mark.

July 8th, 1863, *Adams School, Morville District, St. Helena Island, S. C.*

ASHDALE, NEAR BEAUFORT, S. C., AUGUST 8th, 1863.

The colored people are doing well generally. They are quite industrious, and well informed in all that appertains to raising the cotton and all the other productions of the soil. They are very much interested in all those products that form the means of their subsistence. They are laboring assiduously to procure in the coming harvest sufficient to supply all the wants of the body, with some amount to sell. The Governor of this department in the spring cut off the clothes and rations from all the people that were able to labor in the fields, and it has proved one of the most efficient means of promoting industrious habits among them. So long as they saw before them a source from which they could draw food and clothes, they were contented, and these contributions had a deleterious effect upon them. Now they are aware that if they do not produce sufficient to support themselves, and purchase their clothes, they must suffer, and they are quite ambitious to get as much as possible. It is quite surprising to see the ingenuity and tact which many of them exhibit to accomplish that end. They certainly have imbibed largely the spirit of trade and commerce, by which they increase their revenue. Their little fields are guarded with the strictest care, and the growth of all the products watched with much eagerness, and the profits calculated by them, as much as the cargo and the profits to accrue therefrom are, by the great shippers of our commercial marts. They are fast learning the value of money, and are acquiring an idea of property, whether it be in a horse or land. There is a growing desire among them to become owners of land. Hundreds of them are guarding their little stores with jealous care, and adding to their stock all they can, in order to have sufficient to make purchases at the next sales of land. To be able to receive all the proceeds of their labors, is one of the heights of their ambition. The adjoining plantation to the one where I live, was purchased last year by the negroes. They have worked it themselves without any direction from white people. They have exhibited all the skill, thus far, of those that have been worked by the Government. They have a large field of cotton, and a larger one of corn. I see them frequently, and converse with them about it. They are as proud of their labors as are any of the farmers of the North when success follows a period of industry. They have planted and brought to good growth by the necessary working three acres of cotton, each of which is, I am told, the maximum of one person's allotment, when other crops are worked by the same hand to the maximum. This condition of that plantation excites the emulation of all the surrounding people, and they frequently say that if they could work this land in the same way we could see some great crops. I have no doubt that if the negroes owned the land and could work it with the expectation of receiving all the proceeds, the cotton crop would have been increased one-third, if not one-half.

So far as the question of subsistence is involved with these people, there is not the least doubt about it. They are abundantly competent, and able and willing, to support themselves, and in a short time many of them will acquire a competence that will enable them to demand and supply themselves with many of the comforts of civilized life.

A. B. PLIMPTON.

HILTON HEAD, S. C., SEPTEMBER 13th, 1863.

The people are raising a plenteous crop for their subsistence, with the exception of a few aged and otherwise helpless individuals. There is much matured corn, an abundance of sweet potatoes, considerable rice, and a general supply of various kinds of vegetables all over the islands. There is also a quite extensive crop of cotton, the first picking of which is now taking place. The peach, fig and other fruit harvests have gone by, but there is a profusion of oranges everywhere, some of them beginning to turn yellow. The supply seems to be unlimited. I have been surprised at the amount of

subsistence raised upon the islands; and yet, with more diligence and increased husbandry, the amount may be vastly increased. I see no reason why the natural resources of the islands may not be made to support entirely, at least twice, and perhaps three times their present population. This, of course, would require a more thorough and general superintendence, than has yet been rendered. The people need to be instructed, encouraged, and in many cases compelled to labor.

The agent who comes here for pastime or the mere novelty of change, had better stay at home. The direction of *labor* is vastly important, but scarcely less so is the development of the social, mental and moral faculties of this long oppressed and neglected race. It seems to me there is at present a great lack of teachers, not merely of the alphabet, and more advanced education, but also of social and domestic duties.

G. Pilsbury.

Beaufort, S. C., November 11th, 1863.

The cotton crop has done very fairly this year. The entire crop, from the private as well as Government plantations, will be about double that of last year, or even more than double. The Government will have this year about one hundred thousand pounds of ginned cotton. The first frost came last night, and that will cut off a good deal of cotton that would have ripened in the next fortnight if there had been no frost. The money paid out to the people for their labor on this cotton is very considerable, and makes the industrious ones very well to do.

E. W. Hooper.

LETTERS FROM NEWBERN, N. C.

FROM REV. HORACE JAMES, SUPERINTENDENT OF BLACKS AT NEWBERN.

Office of Superintendent of Blacks,
Newbern, N. C., June 6th, 1863.

Respecting Teachers, I am ready to assure you, from General Foster himself, that he will afford them military protection, government rations, and as good a dwelling place as the circumstances will allow. We have but one Newbern in the department. Here they will have a good house to live in. At Beaufort it would be much the same. But on Roanoke Island, and perhaps at Plymouth and Washington, certainly at Hatteras, we could not supply them so comfortably. I am confident there will be no trouble on this point. Still I wish that those who are sent may share largely in a missionary spirit, and come out here expecting to teach and to live in a log shanty, or even in a tent, if we can do no better for them. Let them aspire to emulate their brothers in self-denial, who have preceded them here in the regiments, and with the sword have cut a passage for the army of Educators to follow on.

Horace James.

Newbern, N. C., July 27th, 1863.

It is not yet a week since Mr. Doolittle opened the school of which Miss Ropes and myself have charge, and to-day we had 258 pupils in attendance, and managed to give to each a morsel of the food for which they are so hungry. The avidity with which they grasp at the least shadow of knowledge is intensely interesting. Once supplied with a book, and the work of school government is at an end. One of my "1st class," aged 25, can read with a good deal of readiness, and the only book he had ever seen until yesterday, is a fragment of an old dictionary; and when I put into his hands a "Third Reader" (Wilson's Series) the strong man wept for joy. In our school the ages range from 5 to 45, and as far as I can judge at present, they will soon leave white pupils far behind.

Every hour spent with them is a fresh surprise, and a new cause for gratitude that I am here. I suffer no inconvenience from the climate, and have but one regret in connection with being here, and that is that I have not a whole fresh life to give to this noble work.

B. L. C.

October 2d, 1863.—Owing to a variety of circumstances, contingent upon the commencement of a new work, it has been almost impossible to keep a record from which any accurate report of my school could be drawn.

Early in September I so far succeeded in systematizing my portion of the field, as to be able to make some approach to such a record. From it I gather the following items:

Names registered for September,	200
Left to attend other schools,	23
Left to find employment,	17
Belonging to the school September 30th,	160
Average attendance for the month,	128
Number between the ages of 6 and 12,	50
" " " " " 12 " 45,	95
" " " " " 45 " 60,	15

The difficulty I have found in learning the names as well as the ages of these people would have been a source of amusement, but for the memory of the great wrong that has caused it. The name "Bill" or "Tom," has sometimes stood for several days upon my list, waiting for the owner thereof to learn the proper patronymic to attach to it. I insist on their possessing, as one of the attributes of freedmen, at least two names; but having borne the surname of their "owner" when in slavery, and left it with their chains, they do not readily understand why they need be troubled with a second name, now that they "call no man master."

I see no abatement of their interest in the school. For regularity and punctuality of attendance, they will compare very favorably, I think, with our Boston schools.

On reaching my school-room door this morning, fifteen minutes before the hour appointed for opening the school, I found 110 waiting admission; and it is not an unusual thing for a large number of them to gather around the door of the Teacher's Home, to escort their respective teachers to their schools.

Their reverence for and child-like trust in the teachings of the Bible is very beautiful. The older ones tell me they always *knew* they should be free, because they knew "'twas told so in the blessed Bible." And they have secretly taught their children to live in hope, to *watch* and wait, for the day of their redemption. I never before had charge of a school where the morning scripture reading produced so visibly a good effect as in this school; there is so much that they seem to feel was written expressly for them.

The most advanced class, numbering 24, can read readily and quite correctly from the "Second Reader" of the National Series, spelling without hesitation any word in the lesson, as well as the names of the various objects in the room, and such as they meet with in the street and elsewhere. Spelling seems to be a favorite pastime in the street and about their homes, and the fortunate boy who can hold the book and pronounce the words for them is "the officer of the day," and respected and obeyed accordingly. I gave them practical questions in very simple arithmetic, but have been able to give but very little time to it. They are getting some idea of geography; but when I took them to Newbern, and led them out of Craven County and even beyond North Carolina, they seemed quite lost in astonishment, and came to the conclusion that 'twas "a big world." A few of my pupils are making fair progress in writing, on slates, of which useful article we have now a good supply.

Lest I weary you, I will say in conclusion, that we are all doing much more and better than we have any right to expect. I sometimes ask them if they don't wish themselves back in slavery, where they might at least have more comfortable clothing and better food; but the invariable answer is in the negative: "Dis bad enough, but right smart sight better'n dat ar."

B. L. C.

November 14th, 1863.—In addition to my morning session for both sexes, I have a sewing-school for such girls and women belonging to the school as are entirely ignorant of plain sewing. The sessions of this school are held on the afternoons of Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday—Wednesday being reserved to allow time for preparing the work. The pupils are making in this, as in all they attempt to learn, a good degree of progress.

To cultivate patriotism in those who have never before had a country to love, is a pleasant and exceedingly interesting part of the teacher's duty here. We are doing it in the Hancock Street Sewing-School, by teaching the little fingers that have picked cotton, to sew together the little bright pieces that they so love to handle, into a bed-quilt or "comforter" for the poor soldiers. It would rejoice the hearts of their friends, to see how delighted they are to know they can do something for others. They are

employed, too, in making garments for the destitute among their own poor, at the camps. To help them help themselves, we only need materials upon which to keep them at work. They can be very easily taught to use them.

My first impressions of the capacity of the blacks to receive and profit by instruction, remain unchanged. In every quality that goes to make the intelligent and teachable, as well as the "docile and affectionate" pupil, these children equal any white children it has ever been my privilege to teach.

B. L. CANEDY.

NEWBERN, N. C., OCTOBER 22d, 1863.

I want to tell you the great need of books in our Sabbath Schools; we have exhausted our supply, and in the name of fourteen hundred Sabbath School Scholars, I pray you send us a quantity. I have four Sabbath Schools under my charge, and as soon as I receive the books necessary to do so, I shall establish two or three more. At one of the Sabbath Schools there is an average attendance of over six hundred scholars; at each of the others, two hundred. We need tracts, primers, testaments, singing books, and papers, and need them immediately. The Sabbath Schools are co-agents with the day schools, and it is very desirable to keep alive the deep interest felt in them.

There are now five day schools in full tide of operation here, and the scholars are making wonderful progress in their studies. If the predictions of many prove true, it will not be necessary to send North for teachers bye and bye. At the evening school which is under my direction, there is an average attendance of over three hundred scholars. It is a highly interesting and popular school. I have the aid of thirty officers and privates (belonging to regiments in this vicinity) in this school.

O. E. D.

NOVEMBER 4th, 1863.—I have established a morning school in a Contraband camp south of the Trent River; there is an average attendance of one hundred and twenty-five pupils, and we now see a very studious band striving to learn with all their powers.

There are about one thousand freedmen in this camp, and many of them who have heretofore depended upon the labors of sons and daughters for their "daily bread," are now seeking other means of supply, that their children may attend school. It is often said to me by these poor people, "I am willing to make any sacrifice that my little ones may be educated," and this remark is made by those who have not a crust of bread for the morrow. There are fifty males and seventy-five females in this school; their ages are as follows:

75 are under 12 years of age.
20 " " 18 " " "
30 " " 25 " " "

My evening school for adults is full of interest; there is an average attendance of three hundred pupils. Over one hundred have learnt to read since they began to attend, and almost two hundred pupils will soon need a more advanced book than the one they are now using. Writing has been introduced into this school. It is my intention that only those who can read well, shall be allowed to have lessons given them in this accomplishment. I am obliged to make this condition for them to learn writing, as there is not space in the building to have many departments of learning. As soon as practicable, I intend to introduce arithmetic into this school.

I have four Sabbath Schools under my care; two of these I established. At one of these schools there are over six hundred pupils, and at each of the others two hundred. As soon as I receive a supply of books and papers, I hope to establish other schools.

O. E. DOOLITTLE.

NEWBERN, NOVEMBER 23d, 1863.

Mr. James gave me a School which Miss Canedy was teaching, consisting of adults and a few children who could not attend her large school. It is one of intense interest. The scholars manifest the most enthusiastic desire to learn. The great point with all seems to be to read the Testament. Some learn very rapidly and quite well, but when they attempt to spell, have no idea whatever of the sound of letters, nor can you give them any if they are old; with the younger ones I am trying to overcome this, and by perseverance shall, I hope, succeed. With those who have grown old, it

seems only to be necessary to teach them to *read*, and the quickest method (however irregular) is the most desirable.

I found everything in Newbern so much more comfortable than I expected, that I have not for one moment felt as though I was enduring any privations. Our ungratified wants have only been a source of amusement, and our many comforts a continual cause for congratulation.

I cannot feel that I am engaged in teaching, *in an ordinary way*, reading, writing, and spelling; but, that each one to whom we impart any instruction, any spark of knowledge, is so much pressure bearing on a lever, that is slowly, but inevitably, elevating a nation.

When I witness their delighted earnest effort to improve, my own heart catches the spirit and echoes the fervent, "bress de Lord," that involuntarily escapes so many lips when they find they can spell out a passage in the Testament or Psalms.

I cannot close without giving you a few incidents connected with my School, and those with whom I come in daily contact. One of my pupils, thirteen years of age, could, six months ago, read only very small words, and that by spelling them out; now she reads better than the average of white children of the North of the same age. She spells difficult words with ease. She is very black—intensely African. She has been at school only part of the six months. Another case is a woman of about sixty-five. She reads *well* in the Testament or in any book at sight, but cannot spell the simplest words. She has learned almost entirely since the Federal forces took Newbern.

We have a boy employed in the house, who has all the proverbial characteristics of the negro, and is in all above mediocrity. He keeps his book constantly with him, not only studying when an opportunity is given him, but stealing time from his work for that purpose. Often when I know he should be at work, I have listened in vain for the sound of his axe, and going quietly out to the wood yard, have seen him hide his Reader under a large stick of wood, and with a sheepish look and a real negro laugh, resume his work; but unless watched the axe will soon be dropped for the book. We have also a girl in the house, who has never had any advantages. She does not know all her letters, but is very observing. This morning she said to me, in as good English as I could use, "Miss Carrie, James did not cut one particle of wood last night." I looked at her astonished, for three weeks ago she could not have put together a correct sentence. She also said to the boy (when he tried to excuse himself for neglecting the wood), "If I could read as well as you can, I would not say *gwine* for going, *specially* when the white folks take so much pains with you." Thus daily are brought before us such demonstrations of the high ability of the negro as must convince those who have hitherto denied that his elevation was possible.

C. E. Croome.

Newbern, N. C., Dec. 22d, 1863.

On the morning of Nov. 23d, I was duly installed as Teacher in a log school-house, in Camp Kimball, just across the Trent River, about one mile from the city. I will suppose you have some knowledge of this school, as Mr. Doolittle was its first Teacher. There were present this morning eighty-eight pupils. Mr. James gave me full power to make any changes I might think best, which privilege I have availed myself of. I found all the little ones on the back seats and completely hid by the larger ones. I commenced the next morning by taking the names and ages of all present, the result being 106. There has been a steady increase of numbers each day, until I now have 212 names registered, of all ages from five years to sixty-one. I have fathers and mothers with their children. Women leave their work until the latter part of the day, and boys refuse to accept situations, that they may avail themselves of these privileges. I would that every child in the North, could look on, and see the eagerness manifested by these poor colored children in their books. It would give them some idea of their own privileges, and perhaps stimulate them to renewed diligence.

I had the benches in front made lower, and placed the smaller children on them, thereby enabling them to touch their feet to the floor. This done, I could command every eye in the room. To arrange them in classes was a work of time. I found a great variety of books, and but three of the National series. They have a great desire to read from a *large* book, supposing they are learning faster. I found they knew by heart the lessons in the "Picture Primer" which they had, and could tell me how much of the book they knew, while in fact they could not read one word. Another difficulty has been to keep them in a class. After arranging them, I have had to watch very sharp, and tell them time and again, until now they do very well. I have introduced six dozen National Primers, having two classes—one just commencing to read

words of two letters, the other a class of thirty-five, reading words of four and five letters. I have a letter class, numbering sixty and upwards; this comprises scholars of all ages. These I teach in concert from the various cards which I have introduced, giving them oral instruction of various kinds, afterwards hearing each one read from the Picture Primer which I found in school. This exercise seems to interest the older ones, as much as the class itself. I have a class of ten in the National First Reader, a small class in the Second Reader, also several who require attention separately. They are anxious to know how to write and cipher. I give some exercises on the blackboard, besides copies on their slates, and never before have I felt so much the need of *two pairs of hands* as now. I was without an assistant until last week, and now have one who has been teaching in Newbern since July, and is only with me for a short time. I have formed a class in Davis's Primary Arithmetic, numbering ten. These I intend to hear recite after the others are dismissed, but they are mostly disposed to stay and listen.

I have been obliged to dismiss the younger children at the close of their exercises, in order to make room for the rest. This difficulty will be obviated by enlarging the building, which has already commenced, when I shall hope to labor to better advantage. I wish I could introduce you to this school as it appears in the morning, and let them sing to you one of their own native songs; afterwards one which they have just learned—"Rally round the Flag." They are delighted with our songs, and catch them very readily. You may imagine how they look, but to know fully, you should see for yourself. All the books I ever read, gave me but a faint idea of their real appearance. I cannot call all their names, but can tell them wherever we meet, by the flash of their eyes. I find them strong in their attachment to us, while their thoughts are oftentimes expressed in the most touching language. I wish I could give you an exact report of one of their public speeches, as well as some of their prayers. They call down all manner of blessings on us Teachers, as well as all the people of the North, not excepting "*Mr. Linkum*" and his Cabinet. My own language is meagre compared with theirs. They speak but the utterances of a full heart, overflowing with gratitude and exceeding great joy, that after so many years of oppression and wrong, they are now Freedmen. Who can wonder? One expression which I heard in a prayer, I must repeat:—"Grant, O Lord, that not a *feather* be lacking in the wing of the North." "Indulgent Father, we thank thee thou didst ever make a Linkum. O spare his life, and bless our Union Army; may one man put a thousand to flight, and ten chase ten thousand."

The sick in camp send for the "School Misses." Some of their leading men have been to the school-house, and expressed their gratitude for my service in a very acceptable manner. I also visit them in their homes, and as far as possible relieve their wants by distributing clothing, but my pen fails to tell you of the destitution, rags, patches, and half nakedness. I would that I were able to arouse the people of the North more thoroughly to a sense of the needs of this suffering people; another winter may not find them so unprepared for the cold.

I think I have introduced you sufficiently for the first time to my school, which I have named for Dr. Russell, and it will hereafter be known as the Russell School. I hope to be able to give you favorable reports from time to time. There is a great work to be done, and no person who has a love for this field of labor, need stand with folded hands.

S. M. Pearson.

LETTERS FROM VIRGINIA.

Portsmouth, Va., May 11th, 1863.

For a week we heard, without anxiety, the booming of the guns at Suffolk, and we begged to be allowed to remain on the Island (Craney Island), but the Doctor was decided, and General Viele and other officers urged the necessity of his sending us North. To that we demurred; but in spite of our unwillingness, we were kept for a week in durance vile at the Hygeia Hotel. We then returned to our work, though the authorities considered it unsafe so to do; and knowing we should soon be taken from the Island, we worked, for a week, ten or twelve hours a day; our pupils striving cheerfully all the while to keep pace with us. In that week, many to whom on Monday we gave their first writing lessons, learned to write me letters. Writing from

memory, excited them amazingly, and writing "Newport News," "Hampton," and their other homes of refuge, was a delight to them. I don't tell you about my sister, but her work tells here all the while. We want primers—one thousand of them. Out of date books can be spared, I doubt not, from many Northern bookstores. You desire us to make our wants known to you. Can you help us in this instance, and that speedily?

Dr. Brown has six hundred and forty-five negroes upon the farms which he directly superintends—from one to five hundred upon each farm. He still has forty farms. Of fourteen a third of the produce is confiscated, and of those he has no oversight. He himself is cultivating two thousand four hundred acres, with grain, vegetables, cotton and tobacco.

L. C.

WHITEHEAD FARM, JUNE 20th, 1863.

I asked, and it was given unto me. The books and slates came and were welcomed, and many of them are already worn in the service. Your help was so ready and efficient, in my hour of need, I incline to drive to your door again. The refugees, with their rags and vermin, are crowding into Norfolk. One hundred and twenty (or more), very destitute, have just gone to Craney Island from Suffolk, and we have nothing to spare from the farms wherewith to clothe them. It is almost certain that the number will steadily increase. How shall we clothe them? They cannot be expected to pay for their clothing. We have at no time been able to meet a present need; and the prospect before us looks very naked. I am dropping my books and slates about upon the farms, but I cannot get a horse to keep constantly upon the road as I expected to do. However, we have work at home; but when I do get to the farms, old men and children flock to my side, and their interest and attention show that in one half hour they get a mighty impulse.

L. C.

NORFOLK, VA., NOV. 11th, 1863.

Four hundred refugees, released by colored soldiers, have just come, empty-handed, into our lines. In the jail-yard, where they once found chains and a lash, all the refugees now find a temporary home. The men and large boys go at once to the Government farms to build huts, and in due season to take their families to the house-warming. Twenty-five refugees came ten days ago; and more will come, from time to time, all winter long. They must be clothed; so, of Northern charity let there be no end.

Many of the negroes upon the Government farms will this month receive wages, and should have the privilege of paying something for their clothing. The number of needy will, necessarily, continue to be large, and it seems necessary to continue the practice of gratuitous distribution; but Dr. Brown unites with me in thinking it very desirable that a store should be opened here for all who hold a purse. He says if you will send a store-keeper, he will furnish him with facilities; and he can furnish you with free transportation from New York.

I have not told you that we present all the refugees with A B C's, and they snatch them greedily, astonishing my sister and myself, long-experienced though we are, with their amazing progress.

L. C.

NORFOLK, VA., DEC. 24th, 1863.

We shall continue our school through the holidays. A prospect of *rest* and *vacation* wearies us.

My sister went to Newbern for a day or two, a week or so ago. She had, for a few weeks, had the entire superintendence of a school of four hundred children. Small children, too, and raw. It was the reception school of the city. Thirty or forty new scholars came every day. A school that only one with a gift could control, and only one with a body could bear upon her shoulders. It was the school in which we had taught through the summer, giving our extra time to the refugees and the farms.

Difficulties and delays have blocked the path-way to our own special family school-house; but now we have one, the doors are open; and by New Year's, we shall have a school-house of our own. At present, we are teaching in a church.

Three hundred more refugees came in on Tuesday; seventy wagon "loads" on Saturday; and one hundred and twenty "loads" a day or two ago. The Doctor drops them upon his farms now, that the city may no longer be over burdened.

LUCY CHASE.

REPORT OF REV. CHARLES LOWE TO THE COMMITTEE ON TEACHERS.

SOMERVILLE, DEC. 7th, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR,—It gives me great pleasure to present, at your request, a statement of the impression made upon my mind by a visit to the field of operations of the Educational Commission for Freedmen, in the department of South Carolina. I had an opportunity to visit many of the schools and plantations on Port Royal, St. Helena and Ladies Islands, and to converse with many who were familiar with the condition of the freed population, and will state as briefly as I can the result of my observation.

First, As to the Schools.

In the immediate vicinity of Beaufort the teachers labor at great disadvantage. The town is an aggregate of Government offices, hospitals and camps. An excessive population of freed people has congregated there, and they are exposed to all the bad influences of such a community. The effect is seen in the Schools, in a want of punctuality and in a restless spirit on the part of the children. Yet even in these Schools the success of the attempt was very gratifying. The children seemed bright and eager to learn, and showed remarkable proficiency. Here, as indeed in all the schools I visited, I was greatly struck by the excellence of the teachers employed. In one of the Schools in Beaufort, there was acting as an assistant, a young colored man—formerly a member of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, and disabled at Wagner. He was teaching some of the classes, and as I watched him I thought he was teaching very successfully. Certainly he had the perfect respect and attention of the pupils, and it seemed to me that such men might be thus employed to advantage, more frequently than they are.

As you go away from Beaufort, the bad influences of that place gradually lessen, till, on the plantations ten miles distant, the people are quite out of their reach, and the consequences are very apparent. Here, with no better teachers (for where all are so good I could not recognize any difference), the discipline of the Schools was greatly superior, and their whole character compared favorably with that of any of our Northern Schools of the same grade.

Second, As regards the ability of the freed people to support and govern themselves, my impressions are equally favorable.

Here again, Beaufort and its immediate vicinity afford a most unfavorable condition for the experiment. And many visitors, judging from what they see there, may give unfair statements in regard to its success. The place, as I have already said, has just the effect, on the people gathered there, that a prolonged muster-field would have on a great mass of people who might crowd about it. Considering this, it was a matter of surprise to me that things are no worse. There is no disorder, and a Quarter-Master, who has occasion to employ a very large number of the men, told me that he never had so little difficulty with laborers. On Thanksgiving day they were all discharged for a holiday, and he said to me that, whereas, with white men, he should be dreading trouble from their absence or disorderly conduct the next morning after the day's carousing, he was sure that these men would all be promptly at their work.

On the plantations removed from the camps the condition of things is most gratifying. The people labor well, and are easily managed, and the superintendents say are always ready to do anything that you can persuade them is for their advantage.

I will not anticipate the statements which are being prepared by one gentleman there (Mr. E. S. Philbrick), in which he will show conclusively the satisfactoriness of their voluntary paid labor so far as the employers are concerned. My only purpose is to testify, as a casual observer, to the good order, the respectful demeanor and thrifty appearance of the colored population, and the general evidence which such a visit could give of a good state of things.

One thing particularly impressed me. I saw the people everywhere, in their homes and in the fields. I have seen the working classes in many countries of the world, and I never saw a peasantry so cleanly dressed, so respectable in their outward appearance or apparently so happy. This is certain in regard to these people—that they are abundantly able to support themselves. If your organization has made any mistake, it has been that you felt at first too little confident of that, and assumed that they must be helped by donations in charity. Undoubtedly there was, for a while, much destitution, and your relief was most timely; but the generosity of the supply encouraged a feeling that they could live without labor, which has been one of the great difficulties to overcome. They certainly need help no longer. I saw them at the stores kept on the Islands, buying, with plenty of money, every variety of articles, and heard of no want.

A paymaster told me that, under the order of General Saxton, permitting them to apply for lands hereafter to be sold, the sum of $4,000 has already been deposited by freedmen. One man is now owner of the plantation of his former master, which he purchased with money loaned him, and which he has now paid for by the earnings of this year's crop.

What interested me most in what I saw, was the conviction, that here is being worked out the problem of whether the black race is fitted for freedom. In many respects the circumstances in this locality are such as to make the experiment peculiarly satisfactory. 1st, The colored people on these Islands are admitted to be inferior to those in most portions of the South, partly because kept more degraded, and partly because close intermarrying has caused them to deteriorate. 2dly, After being left by their masters, they lived for a time under no kind of restraint. And 3dly, By a well meant generosity, when first visited by our sympathy they were encouraged to believe that they could live under freedom without the necessity of labor.

Yet, under all these disadvantages, the experiment has been a triumphant success—apparent, beyond question, to any one who can observe.

To be sure, it can probably never happen that on any general scale, those who shall give to the newly freed people their first instructions in freedom, shall be men and women of such high character and ability as those who have undertaken it here. I was amazed when I saw among the teachers and superintendents so many persons of the very highest culture, and fitted for the very highest positions. I confess I felt sometimes as though it was lavishing too much upon this work; but then I considered (what is now the great feeling with which I regard the whole thing) that this is a grand experiment which is settling for the whole nation this great problem. And when I saw how completely it has settled it, I felt that it was worthy of all that had been given. I believe that the importance of the movement is yet to be realized when the operations on this field shall become the great example for every part of the land.

I am, with great respect, very truly yours,

CHARLES LOWE.

Dr. LeBaron Russell, Boston.

The following letter to the Treasurer of the Committee for Aid to the Freedmen of the West, is from Mr. Edward S. Philbrick, one of the first company sent to Port Royal by the Commission, in March, 1862. After a term of active and most efficient service as Superintendent of Plantations under Gen. Saxton, Mr. Philbrick became the purchaser, at the Government sale for taxes, of thirteen plantations, which he has since conducted, with the result given below. Mr. Philbrick has treated the blacks with great humanity, giving them liberal wages, and paying for the support of teachers out of his own funds.

BEAUFORT, S. C., DEC. 28, 1863.

ALPHEUS HARDY, *Treasurer:*

DEAR SIR,—Enclosed please find my draft for one hundred dollars, for the relief of the families of Freedmen, in response to your circular. Please state to your committee and to any other gentlemen interested in the question of free labor, that I have disbursed the sum of $20,000 during the past nine months among the freedmen here, in the shape of wages, well earned, besides which they have now on hand ample provision to feed their families for twelve months to come, the fruit of their own toil.

I employ about 500 laborers—women and children, mostly, having a population of 920 on my lands. They have raised for me 73,000 pounds of clean Sea Island cotton this year, worth 50d. sterling in Liverpool, besides their own provision crops, above referred to. This has been done in hearing of Gen. Gilmore's big guns on Morris Island, surrounded by camps, with no civil law, and *without* the help of the able-bodied men, who were all pressed into the military service, leaving the plantations with none but old men, women and children. I have no paupers, all the old and infirm being fed and clothed by their friends and children.

I mention these things to show how easy it is to render the negroes a self-supporting and wealth-producing class with proper management; and I, at the same time, fully appreciate the duty imposed upon us as a nation, to extend the area of charity where the unsettled state of the country renders industry impossible until time is given to re-organize and force to protect it. We are more fortunately situated than the people of the Mississippi valley, and have got the start of them.

Respectfully yours, E. S. PHILBRICK.

THE Commission was organized in Boston, February 7th, 1862. Since that date it has sent 114 Teachers and Superintendents to the South. Their names are printed below. Of these 97 went to Port Royal, 11 to Newbern, N. C., 3 to Craney Island and Norfolk, Va., and one each to Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria, D. C. Of the whole, 72 still remain, employed chiefly as Superintendents of Plantations or as Teachers. Their names are printed in Italics. The names of those who have died are marked with an asterisk.

To PORT ROYAL.—*Edward W. Hooper*, Boston; *Edward S. Philbrick*, Brookline; *Wm. C. Gannett*, Boston; Geo. H. Blake, Bangor; J. C. Zachos, Ohio; *Dr. A. J. Wakefield*, J. F. Sisson, I. W. Cole, Boston; *J. W. R. Hill;* Jas. H. Palmer, Deerfield; *D. F. Thorpe*, Providence; David Mack, Cambridge; *T. Edwin Ruggles*, Milton; J. M. F. Howard, Boston; F. E. Barnard,* Dorchester; Dr. James Waldock, Roxbury; *Richard Soule, jr.*, Brookline; Leonard Wesson, Brookline; Wm. Ed. Park, Andover; J. E. Taylor, Andover; *Dr. Charles H. Browne*, Boston; F. A. Eustis, Milton; Sam'l D. Phillips,* Boston; Rev. Daniel Bowe,* Andover; Wm. S. Clark,* Boston; Mrs. E. B. Hale, Miss M. Hale, Boston; Miss M. A. Waldock, Roxbury; *Miss Ellen H. Winsor*, Boston; *Jules S. DeLacroix*, Newburyport; *Geo. M. Welles*, Providence; *Rev. Thos. D. Howard*, Springfield; Rev. Chas. E. Rich, Geo. H. Boynton, Boston; *Rev. S. Peck*, Roxbury; *Dr. F. W. Lawrence*, Boston; *Dr. F. E. Bundy*, Boston; Moses Wright; Rev. John Orrell, Sandwich; *Arthur Sumner*, Cambridge; Richard S. Edes, Providence; *O. E. Bryant*, Bridgewater; *Geo. H. Hull*, Chelsea; D. B. Nichols; Geo. H. Duran; Geo. Daniels; E. Horn; Mrs. H. W. Philbrick, Brookline; *Miss H. H. Ware*, Milton; Rev. J. Horton; *J. S. Severance*, Concord; *R. W. Allen*, Hartford; *John G. Nichols*, Kingston; *Chas. P. Ware*, Milton; *Chas. Follen*, Boston; *F. J. Williams*, Brookline; Chas. C. Soule, Brookline; *Charles Follen Folsom*, Jamaica Plain; H. L. Breed; *J. R. Dennett*, Reading; *W. N. Murdock*, Boston; *E. P. Dyer*, Hingham; Miss Eliza Ruggles,* Milton; Rev. A. D. Milne, Tiverton, R. I.; Chs. P. Kemp, Boston; Mrs. E. Clark, Boston; *Rev. W. W. Hall*, Providence; *E. G. Dudley*, Boston; A. B. Brown, Boston; W. T. G. Pierce,* Melrose; John H. Goodhue;* *Jas. G. Cole*; *A. B. Plimpton*, Melrose; *J. N. Trask*, Cambridge; *N. C. Dennett*, Worcester; Benj. A. Lincoln,* Boston; *Miss Rice*, Cambridge; *Mrs. H. Bartlett*; *Miss H. Carter*, Cambridge; *Miss S. E. Richardson*, Providence; *Edward G. Stetson*, Lexington; *Gilbert Pillsbury*, Ludlow; *John H. Pillsbury*, Boston; *Theodore E. Davis*, Fitchburg; *J. G. Dodge*, Winchester; *Wm. H. Alden*, Hartford; *C. C. Waters*, Salem; *Geo. S. Morison*, Milton; *Chs. C. Drew*, Boston; *Mrs. C. H. Browne*, Boston; *C. Edward Dyer*, Dorchester; *Wm. G. S. Keene*, Lynn; *Mrs. C. M. Severance*; *Miss Ellen M. Lee*, Templeton; *Miss Helen M. Ireson*, Lynn; *Mrs. A. F. Pillsbury; Mrs. J. G. Dodge.*

To CRANEY ISLAND AND NORFOLK. — *Miss Lucy Chase, Miss Sarah E. Chase*, Worcester; *Miss Martha H. Chace*, Providence.

To NEWBERN, N. C.—*Mr. O. E. Doolittle*, Boston; *Miss B. L. Canedy*, Fall River; Miss Alice S. Ropes, Boston; *Miss Teresa O. James*, Roxbury; *Miss S. M. Pearson*; *Mrs. C. E. Croome*; *Miss Esther Warren*, Exeter, N. H.; *Mr. Wm. V. West*, Nantucket; *Miss Anna C. Canedy*, Fall River; *Miss Anna P. Merriam*, Worcester; *Miss L. N. Tuttle.*

To WASHINGTON, D. C.—Miss C. A. Andrews, Newburyport.

To GEORGETOWN, D. C.—*Miss Frances W. Perkins.*

To ALEXANDRIA, D. C.—*Miss Virginia A. Lawton.*

Rev. Thomas D. Howard, having returned from Port Royal, has been sent as agent of the Commission to examine and report upon the condition and wants of the Freedmen at New Orleans and the vicinity.

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